

Public Defender News



Chief's Corner

Special points of interest:

- *News from the Regions*
- *Microsoft Office Tips*



Colleagues and friends,

I had hoped to offer sage words of wisdom in this, my first column as chief public defender. However, I have been focused on making the transition from private practice to the public sector, and grappling with a steep learning curve. Dave Stenerson went out of his way to make the transition as seamless as possible, and the staff here in the central office have been exceedingly helpful. I look forward to working with you as we serve the interests of our clients. Please know that I am excited and energized to return to the public defense ranks, and I am honored to serve you.

Bill Hooks

Family and Medical Leave Benefits

By Barb Kain

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The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows employees to balance their work and family life by taking reasonable leave for qualifying family and medical reasons. The FMLA provides eligible employees with job-protected leave and requires group health benefits to be maintained during the leave.

Employees eligible for leave may take up to 12 workweeks of FMLA leave within a 12-month period for certain types of family and medical leave. The 12-month period begins on the first day leave is taken as FMLA leave. Exceptions to this are in the case of qualifying FMLA leave for adoption or birth. In these cases, the 12-month period starts on the date of the birth or adoption. Leave may be taken for any one, or for a combination, of the following reasons:

- to care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;
- for the employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of their job; and/or
- because of any qualifying exigency arising when the employee's spouse, child, or parent is a member of any branch of the Armed Forces on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending call to covered active duty or order to covered active duty status.

If you meet any of the above criteria contact Barb Kain, Human Resource Officer 444-9545 or 496-6091 to learn more about the Family Medical leave benefits and requirements.

Who's On First?

By Harry Freebourn



It takes a lot of coordination by many parties to run a state agency, even one of our relatively small size. Our two programs (Public Defender and Appellate Defender) have an authorized employee work force of 208.50 FTE. We also use over 200 contract attorneys, and have an annual budget of over \$23 million. As you know, we are supervised by the Montana Public Defender Commission which consists of 11 volunteer members appointed by the Governor. However, you may not know that there are numerous other committees, teams, and workgroups in place consisting of Commission members and employees from around the state who take on additional duties along with their “real” jobs. So we are a group of multi-taskers.

Here are some examples:

- The Commission currently has 12 standing or ad hoc committees. Committees that are currently very active include the Strategic Planning, Budget, and Legislative Committees. They are working on long term organizational planning, budgeting for the 2015 biennium, and proposed legislation for the next session. Other Commission committees that have been more active in the past or will become more active in the near future include Collective Bargaining, Contract Process and Approvals, Personnel, Standards, Eligibility and Cost Recovery, and Treatment Courts. Staff teams are assigned to work with each of these committees.
- Some workgroups and teams are required by state law, agency policy, or other directive. You may remember reading about the Change Management Committee in the September newsletter. The Internal Controls Committee’s purpose is to design and implement controls for the organization that help to identify and prevent fraud and other risks inherent in any operation. We have Labor Management Committees and bargaining team members. Individual offices designate safety team members, fleet managers, records coordinators and case management system “super users.” A business continuity team plans for the unthinkable, and once every two years we activate a legislative team to track legislation that will impact our operation and prepare fiscal notes.
- The agency is required to appoint people to serve certain functions. The purchasing officer keeps us in line with Title 18 (purchasing laws). IT staff serve as our data security coordinator and our technical security specialist. We are required to have a state depository program coordinator (!) and a records management coordinator.

If you are interested in more information on any of these groups or appointments (or would like to volunteer to wear another hat), just let me know.

Welcome, Emily!



Central Services would like to introduce their newest employee, Emily LeCoure. Emily will be handling payroll, travel vouchers, and motor pool vehicles and will be available to help answer any other questions you may have about policies or procedures. Emily is married with two small children, loves outdoor sports and is a great asset to the Central Services Division. We hope you will all help us welcome Emily to OPD!

Employment Stats

The State of Montana Executive branch employs 11,516 regular full time and part time employees, 97 less than last year. The average state employee is 48 years old, has worked for state government for 12 years, and earns \$42,483 annually. The average age has increased slightly while the years of service have remained relatively the same over the past four years.

Over half of state employees hold positions requiring a bachelor's degree or equivalent education and experience (72% of OPD employees). In contrast, only about 17% of Montana's jobs require a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. To further elaborate on OPD's numbers, 59% require a JD, 13% require a bachelor's degree, and 28% require less than a BA.

News from Around the State

Region 2

Nick Miller in the Hamilton office got an acquittal in a felony trial on March 27—assault on a minor and partner/family member assault. He won against Bill Fulbright, Hamilton's county attorney.

Region 3

Melissa Edwards convinced the Sentence Review Division to reduce a sentence by 15 years (from one year DOC followed by 19 years MSP, to 20 years DOC with 15 suspended) on an Aggravated Assault conviction, with a recommendation for Nexxus followed by pre-release. To the best of our knowledge, it's the only Sentence Review relief granted so far this year, with the same panel granting no relief last year. Her client has a documented serious mental illness that the Sentence Review Division acknowledged.

Cassidy Blomgren won an acquittal for her client who was charged with Endangering the Welfare of a Child. During trial, the Court ruled in her favor on approximately 29 of 30 evidentiary objections. This trial came about after the State refused to charge her client with Assault on a Minor and a related DPHHS action was dismissed.

Region 11

The attorneys from the Region 11 office went above and beyond and were successful in getting a 15 year old youth off the registered sex offender list. He had an incident in Colorado and was required to list himself as a sex offender at the age of 10 years old.

Microsoft Office Tips

Quickly Rename Multiple Files in Explorer

Renaming a file in Windows Explorer is very easy: Just select the file with a single click and press F2. This allows you to edit the file name. When you are done, click Enter to finish. But what happens if you want to rename multiple files? Yes, you can press F2 multiple times, but there is a better way!

When you need to rename multiple files, press F2 and edit the name of the first file as you normally would. But, don't press Enter when you are done. Instead, press Tab. This will jump you to the next file in the list and it will select the entire filename so you can edit it. Just repeat the process for all the files you want to rename!

Change Line Spacing in Word with Keyboard Shortcuts

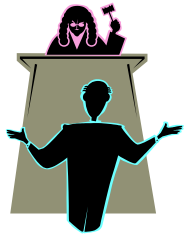
You can change line spacing in Word by clicking on Format, selecting Paragraph, clicking on the Indents and spacing tab, and adjusting the spacing settings. Whew! That's a lot of work. There is a better way.

Changing the line spacing in a Word document is very easy if you remember a few keyboard shortcuts.

- Pressing Ctrl+5 changes to 1.5 line spacing
- Pressing Ctrl+2 changes to double line spacing
- Pressing Ctrl+1 will give you single line spacing

(If you are using Word for Mac, substitute the Command key for the Ctrl key.)





Contractor Corner

By Carleen Green, Accounting Supervisor

NO THIRD PARTY COSTS = MORE \$\$\$ IN YOUR POCKET

Please remember that OPD **cannot** reimburse you for third party costs. If you require services from a vendor who asks you to pay them, such as a process server, please ask them to contact OPD directly so they can be set up in the State's vendor system. If you choose to pay one of these vendors, OPD **cannot and will not** reimburse you.

FEWER MILEAGE ERRORS = TIMELY PAYMENTS

The current mileage rate is .555 per mile – **not** .55/mile. **Please** make sure you use the correct rate on your travel forms. If the wrong rate is used, your payment will be delayed while your claim goes through the correction process. Also, please make sure you clearly state on your travel voucher which cities/towns you are traveling **to and from** because we don't know what it means when you say "to jail."

ACCURATE VENDOR ID = FASTER CASH

Please make sure you put your state vendor ID on your claim form, especially if you have more than one. If we have to figure out your vendor ID, it will take extra time to process your payment. If you are not sure what your vendor ID is, please contact Central Services, (406) 496-6080.

Bad Days at Work—We All Have Them!

The Lost Dr. Seuss Poem



I Love My Job!

I love my job. I love the pay!
I love it more and more each day.
I love my boss, he is the best!
I love his boss and all the rest.

I love my office and its location. I hate to have to go on vacation.
I love my furniture, drab and grey, and piles of paper that grow each day!
I think my job is really swell, there's nothing else I love so well.
I love to work among my peers, I love their leers and jeers and sneers.
I love my computer and its software; I hug it often though it won't care.
I love each program and every file, I'd love them more if they worked a while.

I'm happy to be here. I am. I am.
I'm the happiest slave of the Firm, I am.
I love this work. I love these chores.

I love the meetings with deadly bores.
I love my job - I'll say it again - I even love those friendly men.
Those friendly men who've come today, in clean white coats to take me away!!

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**ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS
TO JUSTICE STATEWIDE**

We're on the web!

www.publicdefender.mt.gov

The Office of the State Public Defender is responsible for statewide public defender services, including appellate representation, provided through local offices and the Office of the Appellate Defender.

The mission of the Office of the State Public Defender is to ensure equal access to justice for the State's indigent and those who are statutorily entitled to services in civil cases, as well as to provide appellate representation to indigent clients.

William F. Hooks is the Chief Public Defender for the State of Montana. Joslyn Hunt is the Chief Appellate Defender. Both are appointed by the Public Defender Commission, currently chaired by Fritz Gillespie. For more information, please visit our website, www.publicdefender.mt.gov.



Upcoming Training Events

June 26-27: *Support Staff Conference (Helena)*

October 10-12: *Annual Meeting and Training Conference (Billings)*

Coming Soon!
Desktop Video Training!